Gram Sevak

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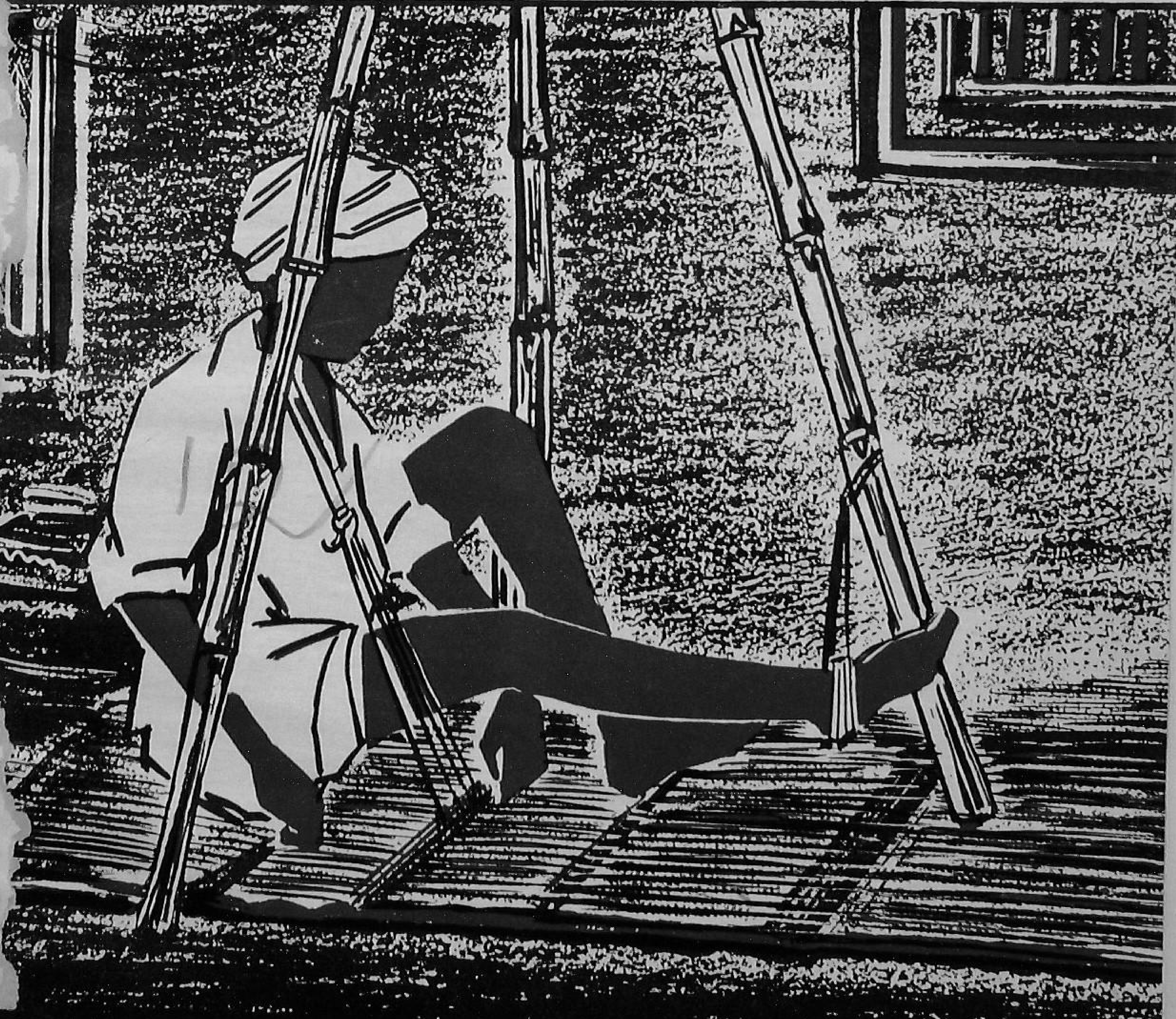

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

GRAM SEVAK

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BASTION OR BASTILLE ?

S. K. Dey

THERE IS A common saying in Bengal that when the aunt is more concerned about the welfare of the boy than his mother, the case is one of grave suspicion.

For 50 years, our leaders made common cause with the people to fight the colonial power. If the country was to move forward, they declared, the Government of the country must belong to the people. Gandhiji elaborated the thesis further by claiming that Swaraj was the birth-right of every Indian and Swaraj meant decentralisation of State power and democratisation of administration till the State had virtually withered away except for broad purposes of coordination, defence and external relations.

The Constitution of India which came into force on January 26, 1950, with the Parliament and the State Legislatures, was the first step in the direction of the Swaraj promised to the people. From the first step to the last, the distance is nearly 2,000 miles and the gap is what can be expected between the urban settlements which are the power centres and the countryside which continues inarticulate and half-famished. Swaraj would be still-born until this yawning gap has been bridged. Instead of attempting to bridge the gap, we have destroyed during these 12 years of Independence, most of the intermediary stages of Local-Self Government. Such institutions should have provided a secure foundation for the democracy we are pledged to establish in this country where individualism had acquired over the centuries a license with a vengeance.

We destroyed Local-Self Government Institutions because, we say, they had grown to be seats of decadence, factions, inefficiency and mal-administration. We nurtured the illusion, and interested people encouraged this thinking in us, that it was much easier to administer the country through Government servants deployed at the Division, District, Sub-Division, Taluqa and Village levels. In being an unwitting party to this death sentence on democracy at the ground level, we failed to recognize that there could be no democracy in the Parliament unless this democracy grew from the family upwards all along the line. We ignored the crucial fact that the sovereignty we claim for ourselves as a people was one which was secured by us from an alien power which ruled this country by occupation. Between this and a Government by representation, the distance is more than the distance between the North and the South poles. It is amazing that a people with the maturity such as we claim, still do not realise that sovereignty in a democracy can only be conferred from below by by a sovereign people.

It will be contended that our Constitution has bestowed freedom and sovereignty on our people through its directive principles. We should ask ourselves for a moment whether the bulk of our people have the understanding of the rights that accrue to them from the Constitution. Have they the wherewithal individually or organisationally today, to exert their rights under the Constitution in a Court of Law if these rights are transgressed either by a wily "Few" amongst them or by the petty Government servants ? What does the answer reveal?

The Community Development Programme came on the birth day of Bapu on October 2, 1952, to give an organised voice to the inarticulate "Many". It was to help them to grow into self-reliant communities such as could choose wisely the representatives to administer their affairs at different levels, to sustain them in the role which they were to play and to make proper use of the assistance—financial and technical—such as the Government agency could offer. The scheme for Democratic Decentralisation suggested by the Balwantray Mehta Study Team was a step further in the extension of democracy towards the people. The proposal was acclaimed with enthusiasm by the National Development Council.

Andhra and Rajasthan have already implemented the programme on a State-wide scale. Six or seven other States will follow soon. The remaining States also are going ahead processing the scheme. Yet, in the face of all these, there is strong resistance on the part of many a so-called leader of people on the one hand and many a veteran Government servant on the other, who counsel that we should go slow, that the people have first to be ready to manage their own affairs before they are entrusted with responsibilities. Public memory is proverbially short. These loud arguments otherwise should have reminded us immediately of the identical language that the colonial rulers in India used against us and our leaders for decades. It is hardly realised that administration of the affairs of a people is something like the art of swimming which can only be mastered while one is in the water and is really trying to float and move with the ground below, beyond his reach. No one over has learnt swimming in any other way. No one has learnt administration either, without going through trials and errors in the process.

The voice against the extension of democracy therefore is the voice of the proverbial aunt. If the mother is alive, she should protect her son from the wiles of the scheming aunt. If she does, we would see earlier than we realise now, that most of the trouble in India today arises from the fact that administration is far too remote, far too concentrated at far too few a point, to be effective or democratic over the inevitably long-distance control system. We would realise then that the unrest we see around in political parties and elsewhere is due largely to one single factor, namely that our Government, as it functions today, does not offer creative outlet to the tens of thousands of dynamic minds and hands in political parties and outside which cry to give a hand to the basic task of reconstruction of the motherland. Democracy in India, because of our predominant rural economy and the peculiar geography and history, will have to be of a different kind. Our democracy will demand progressive amendments of the Constitution till the Government now controlled by the Parliament and the State Legislature can travel back to the masters in progressive stages.

Thus, there will in future be a Central Government, a State Government, a District Government, a Block Government and a Village Government. The Village Government will be the basic unit of our sovereign democracy with the maximum of powers to govern such of the affairs of the village as fall within its own sphere of operation surrendering inter-village responsibilities to the next higher body. Assumption of powers within its own sphere and surrender of those which involve inter-unit cooperation will be the feature from the ground upwards till the Parliament functions as an instrument largely for coordination of national policies, for defence and external affairs.

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THERE IS NO SHORT CUT

New Responsibilities

By YUDHISHTAR

IT HAS BEEN said that the new sense of political freedom dating from August 15, 1947 has not touched the village community. That the villagers have not been sensitive to the free air which they breathe. That there has been no adequate realisation of the new responsibilities on their part. That there has been a widening of the gulf which separates the various sectors of village life and a proportionate shrinkage in the common meeting ground. That there has been more clamour for rights and less willingness to do one's duty. That, in effect, the consciousness of community rights and community responsibilities has not kept in step with each other. How can any community develop under such conditions? Let me analyse the factors leading to the present state of restlessness and expectation.

PRESSING THE BUTTON

We began very well indeed. We gave every adult an equal share in shaping the national affairs. We made the people politically alert. We encouraged them to expect many new things. We promised to lead them to a new way of life. We did everything to restore their influence in the councils of the nation. On their part, they believed that they had pressed the button by casting their votes, that there was nothing more for them to do except to go about their work in the way they had been used to for generations.

True, we gave them more Taccavi loans. We gave them a Gram Sevak, a Block Development Officer, a Jeep for the staff to go to the villages, Kaccha roads and Pucca roads, improved seeds, artificial fertilizers, new pesticides, a school and a Panchayat Ghar. What more could they want, we argued. We could not possibly give them a new philosophy of life, except the one propounded by Gandhiji. What more could a secular administration offer to its people?

They welcomed all this—the Taccavi loans, the improved seeds down to the Panchayat Ghar. But there was not enough of these to go round the entire community. The majority of this community were landless tenants and daily wage-earners and there was nothing left for them in the till. The community could not develop in parts. The programme of assistance would have to be multiplied many times over, if everyone in the community were to be attended to. The self-aid programme had its limitations. Resources have had to be pumped in continuously over virgin areas. There was perceptible imporvement in agricultural production but the marketing system resisted any reform.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

The Panchayat Ghars which were built by the people themselves remained ineffective. We discovered at last that our villagers must have a full voice in shaping and administering their own affairs. The tempo of activity released by our agricultural production and construction works programmes are now finding a new outlet in the processes of democratic decentralisation. Every State has agreed in principle to build new citadels of power in the Zila Parishad, the Block Samiti and the Panchayat. Peoples' enthusiasm is now being channelised into local self-governing units which will be mainly responsible for the conduct of local affairs in the District, the Block and the

village. The democratic and the Welfare State set-up which has so far been functioning at the Centre and the State level is now being brought into play at the District, Block and village level.

We have at last found the philosopher's stone! Every State is passing elaborate legislation on the functioning of the Panchayat and its organic links with the Block Samiti and the Zila Parishad. The short experience of Community Development programme during the last seven years has prepared the ground for the transference of administrative power to these local bodies. But will they remain as mere cogs in a decentralised form of administration? Obviously not. The entire Block funds and the personnel are to be administered by them. The Panchayats will collectively take over the administration of development work as well as some part of general administration in the villages and the Block area. The Sarpanches who will function on behalf of their villages will decide on their own priorities, execute their own schemes and work out their own future plans. These are the new responsibilities which the Administration is transferring to them. But in the hands of the Sarpanches, they will be more than merely administrative.

The stage is now set for our village leaders, elected or traditional, to exercise the new functions devolved on them. Will they be equal to the new situation? Our experience in the training of Gram Sahayaks is encouraging. Hundreds of thousands of these Gram Sahayaks trained in our Camps all over the country have, in a sense, provided the vanguard of the movement. It is difficult for a town-dweller or a newspaper reader to feel the impact of our training programme in certain fields of activity. But even the traditional leaders have given a good account of themselves in reacting favourably to our extension methods. The Panchayats may not be all that they should be but they are being thrown into the vortex of developmental activity in a manner that they can no longer remain helpless, isolated units, symbolic of an ancient tradition.

BED-ROCK

Since the year 1938, the Panchayat Raj has been very much before the public. But so far it has remained an ideal, without an organic link connecting it to the administrative structure of the country. Today, thanks to the programme of Community Development, the Panchayat has become the bed-rock of the new edifice of decentralised administration. It is being allotted a portion of the land revenue to enable it to carry on its obligatory functions. It is to be responsible for the execution of all local works. It is invested with new powers of taxation.

But can the Panchayat afford to become unpopular by taxing its own people? There is no basis for the fear that taxes will be resisted by our villagers. The revenue will be spent in their own territory. The clamour for more amenities cannot produce a discordant note in the Panchayat set-up. The taxable capacity of our villagers may be negligible but they have always shown their eagerness to share with others what little they had. This was the basis of the customary obligations of certain classes of people in a village which hold good even today. Duties always came before rights. While in the political field rights may appear to be more important to an individual, in the economic and social field, the duties of an individual in the village community have always been well recognised. Any reasonably efficient Panchayat will be able to tap effectively many new sources of taxation.

Everything will depend on the generosity of the State Governments in allotting funds to the Panchayat Samitis from their general revenues. Public opinion in the villages is already very pronounced that rural areas do not get a fair deal at the hands of the State. It will be an act of prudence to allocate to the Block Samitis certain minimum funds from the general revenues, generously computed on the basis of population and area. Such generosity will serve as the best national investment against dangers of apathy and mismanagement in our local affairs. For once our villagers begin to feel the efficient functioning of their own institutions, they will do every-

thing in their power to keep them going with their own efforts. This has also been the experience of a Community Development programme during the last seven years. The people have been the first to come out with their contributions against the "matching grants", which always came last. Our villagers have often exercised the greatest restraint and have submitted themselves to the many wrongs done to them by any particular administrative or political set-up. But they have always harshly dealt with corruption and nepotism. This may not ring true in the face of our recent experience. But when the Panchayats are invested with full powers of administration, public vigilance in a village is bound to be far more effective than public vigilance at the State headquarters or even at the Centre.

Factionalism has dogged the steps of the village Panchayats in recent times. This was because its constitution and organisation had not grown with times. What more could we expect when its finances were weak, its functions stillborn and its leadership poor. The continuing life in the institution showed itself in local feuds and partisanship. This factionalism born of frustration and despair is now being channelised along constructive lines.

Those who have recently visited the villages in Rajasthan would bear testimony to the changing scene: traditional leadership is being rapidly displaced by a new class of progressive and intelligent villagers who have been awakened to their new power and responsibility. Down South in Madras State, the progressive leaders in the villages are getting equipped to take over the new powers and exercise their new responsibilities. The Panchayat had been with them for centuries and they welcome this transfer of power.

I do not for a moment think that our Panches and Sarpanches are fully competent for the new job. A vast training programme for them is under way all over the country. Here again, the training of Gram Sahayaks which has already gathered some momentum has shown the way for the training programme of Panchayat personnel.

At the Block level there is already an Extension officer in charge of Panchayat work. Ultimately, the Block Development Officer himself will be reduced to the position of the Chief Panchayat Officer for all the Panchayats in the Block. The entire Block personnel would be there to carry out the programme as decided by the Panchayats. And so the training programme intended for the various categories of Block personnel will have an intimate bearing on the entire Panchayat work.

The official blueprint has packed the Panchayat with a number of functional Sub-Committees. These relate to health, education, cultural activities, agriculture and a host of other subjects which will have to be tackled by a Panchayat in its day-to-day functioning, as the statutory representative body of the villagers. An attempt is being made to nurture these functional Sub-Committees into self-sufficient units and integrate them vertically with similar Sub-Committees at the Block, District and State levels. If this idea can be worked out successfully, it may work out a pattern of functional democracy at those levels. It is any how too early to see so far ahead when the immediate need of the hour is the initiation of the Panches and Sarpanches into the new philosophy of a decentralised form of administration.

BASTION OR BASTILLE?

(*Continued from page* 2)

To sum up, the sovereignty by representation is still to grow. This will not, until democracy has travelled all along the line up to the family not in the form of self-Government at the courtesy of higher institutions but as Local-Government guaranteed by the Constitution. The trials and errors involved in the process of reaching this consummation will constitute the training for democratic sovereignty. This cannot be bypassed. The voice against the urgency and the inevitability of the process is the voice of the wily "Few" and their counterpart in the Government agency. If we look around, we shall see how so-called democracy failed to decipher the "Writing on the wall" in time, and grew into a luxury to be superseded by autocracy. We call ourselves a wise people. This demands the capacity to learn from the errors of others. Shall we wake up?

U. N. REPORT ON OUR PROGRAMME

INDIA's community development programme has been hailed by the United Nations Evaluation Mission as "one of the major experiments of the 20th century" the results of which are of 'world-wide interest'. "No country has undertaken community development on as wide a scale as India", observes the Mission in its report to the Government.

Organised at the request of the Government of India by the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration, the Mission consisted of Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Canada), Chairman, Professor Rene F. Dumont (France), and Dr. Margaret Read (U.K.).

The Mission was assigned to assess the community development programme—its basic objectives, its impact on the process of general development and of changing attitudes in the villages, its capacity to contribute to the economic advancement of the country and the results so far achieved. The Mission arrived in India on December 5, 1958, and spent about three months in studying the programme.

The Mission recognises that the problem of change is particularly difficult in Indian villages where the force of ancient culture is still strong and pervasive and where two of the major traditional systems—the land tenure and the caste systems—are inherently conservative and opposed to change. While change can be brought about by compulsion, the Mission points out that India has chosen the way which involves local initiative and voluntary cooperation.

The community development programme, according to the report, "represents an effort of unprecedented magnitude to establish a progressive system of agriculture in a land of impoverished soil and a more democratic social structure in a hierarchical (caste) society".

ALL PARTIES SUPPORT

Although the programme was initiated and undertaken by the party in power, the opposition parties, the Mission observes, also support it as a whole and only criticise its shortcomings and inadequate implementation. Since all parties support planned community development, the Mission suggests that M.P.s and MLAs might assume even greater responsibility for leadership in this movement.

The Mission noted that the programme had been integrated with general administration taking care not to create a separate administrative machinery or hierarchy. It discounts the criticism that the cost of the staff is excessive. The Block funds spent on staff salaries, it points out, cannot be regarded as an overhead administration charge because most of the staff is not involved in administration but engaged in the programme of assistance and guidance to rural people.

The report is critical of the present grant-in-aid policy which, the Mission feels, very often weighs so heavily on the whole programme that the fulfilment of the targets by BDOs and other staff is measured by the amount of money spent.

EMERGENCY TASK FORCE

The Mission attaches supreme importance to the need for increasing agricultural production and pleads for greater concentration of staff and funds in areas where irrigation facilities have been provided or new land has been reclaimed. In such areas, it suggests formation of an "emergency task force" by increasing the number of village-level workers and strengthening the agricultural extension staff by addition of crop and irrigation experts. Such a task force might be moved from one area to another wherever economic or agricultural conditions warrant such an intensive programme.

The main task from now on the report adds, is to protect the soil from destruction and increase its productive capacity. A series of measures including speedy land reforms and public works programmes centred on soil improvement have been recommended by the Mission.

The rate of expansion of the programme, in the opinion of the Mission, will be "crucial" to the ultimate success of the programme. It urges the Government of India to consider whether for several years to come ex-

pansion should proceed at the rate accepted for 1959 (300 blocks) or whether the additional efforts should rather be concentrated on consolidating the existing blocks. "A too fast and unrealistic rate of expansion can only multiply existing difficulties and create illusory coverage achievements."

Weeding out of inefficient and undesirable persons which, in some States, is estimated at 25 per cent. of the total, seems advisable to the Mission. Strengthening of supervision and better in-service training are also recommended.

The report contains suggestions for utilising unskilled labour, which is abundant in villages, for intensification of agriculture, soil conservation, minor irrigation, afforestation, etc. In all these labour intensive activities, the community development workers must play a key role as stimulators, advisers and organisers of people in local communities.

NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE

The Mission supports the principle of voluntary service and considers an all-India plan to utilise man-power as an urgent requirement. The Government, it says, may consider whether the time is ripe for a National Youth Service for specified age-groups.

Investments made so far under community development scheme, the Mission thinks, have tended more in the direction of roads, wells and schools, etc., rather than in the direction of agricultural improvement. The provision of village amenities like paving of the streets and construction of panchayat buildings might be delayed and the money and labour spent on more productive operations.

The report also refers to the widely shared impression that *shramdan* is seldom applied to agricultural improvement and that it has lost its initial drive and enthusiasm.

The Mission regretted that it could not find many community development projects in the village industries sector with a definite link with urban markets. It feels that plans and training for small-scale industries in the rural areas should be made in the light of anticipated future developments especially of new sources of power that may become available in the next few years.

India must gradually change the concept of village self-sufficiency and relate its rural improvement programme to the industrial development of the country as a whole under Five Year Plans. India already has labour and cattle resources that are not fully employed. It would be unfortunate to have underemployed machinery as well, says the report.

Commenting on health improvement, the report admits that for most of India, it was through community development planning that health services penetrated into remote rural areas. This was particularly true of maternity and child health services.

IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATIVES

The Mission appreciates the fundamental importance of cooperative endeavour in community development. It commends efforts to promote service cooperatives, as an aspect of community development, for collective purchase and sale and joint use of equipment (such as pumps and, in due course, tractors).

Marketing cooperatives, the Mission opines, should form a major element in any plan for the marketing of agricultural production, particularly of foodgrains, and producer cooperatives should be the foundation of a national marketing plan.

The current proposal for state monopoly of the grain trade cannot succeed, the Mission observes, unless there is a vast network of local cooperatives for storing and selling grain.

For the success of co-operatives, education of members, initiative and energy in the administrative personnel and advanced commercial training for managerial staff are regarded essential.

In the opinion of the Mission, there are two main aspects of women's programme. One is the need for teaching skills to women who must earn cash for the sake of their families; the other the integration of

teaching of women with that of men in respect of the improvement of house-hold premises and family life in terms of food, health, etc.

Panchayats are so important in laying the foundation of village government, says the Mission, that they should be able to rely to an increasing extent on their own activities for the welfare of the community. They are to be charged with making development plans at the village-level. The Panches as a group will, however, need careful and persistent training in these important new aspects of their responsibilities.

MORE FUNDS FOR PANCHAYATS

The report suggests that the State might consider returning to the panchayats a larger percentage of the land revenue.

Dealing with the problems of special groups like scheduled castes and tribes, the Mission welcomes the financial assistance in the block budget for improving the living quarters of Harijans. It also notes that in the primary schools Harijan children take their place among the rest without being made conscious of their caste. The primary school might prove to be one of the most potent influences in removing the social stigma from this group of villagers, thinks the Mission.

Probably no single aspect of community development work in India, says the report, has received more attention than the training schemes. Other countries, less advanced than India, in establishing a community development movement will find the training schemes in India of great value.

IMPACT ON PEOPLES' MIND

Referring to the change in peoples' attitude brought about by the programme, the Mission endorses findings of various research institutes that in community development areas farming families are reducing their expenditure on ceremonies like weddings. Instead, they are putting money in improvements of land and farms.

In its direct contacts with villagers, the Mission noticed that the shackles of the old bondage of dependence on monsoon rains were being slowly loosened, demand for better seeds and insecticides was growing and the fatalistic attitude towards disease was disappearing. Although changes in the social sphere appeared slower, village families were sending their girls to schools and early marriages were on the decline.

The villagers' inability to understand the vital link between greater production, increased taxation and hence more funds for welfare services was responsible for their expectations sometimes tending to be unrealistic. Unless some rudimentary economic teachings were arranged for leaders in village society, the Mission cautions, there may be real frustration.

TRAINING OF SARPANCHES

THE ANNUAL Conference on Community Development held at Mysore approved the following broad outlines of the scheme for training of Sarpanches and Up-Sarpanches on the basis of which the State Governments have been asked to formulate their schemes :

(*i*) The training should be of a Seminar type involving discussion and brief talks and should be for a period of 5—7 days.

(*ii*) The training programme will be divided into the following three categories :

(*a*) *General knowledge* :

The object is to create proper approach, attitudes, initiative and leadership by informed talks and discussions on our problems, planning, civic duties, etc. The talking points should be prepared in advance in simple language on the following, among other subjects :—

1. Our Government.
2. Our problems, planning and the Five Year Plans.
3. Philosophy and objectives of Community Development.
4. Our three primary institutions.
5. The State Panchayat Act and the Rules made thereunder.

(*b*) *Technical subjects* :

The objective is to impart

(*Continued on page* 16)

PANCHAYAT SAMITI IN ACTION

WITH THE advent of Panchayat Samitis, there is a lot of activity in the rural areas around Samalkot. The District Board Administration, now in the hands of official agencies, will be wounded up as soon as the elections to the Zilla Parishad are completed. The period of lull for the last seven to eight years in the countryside is coming to an end. The recent elections to the Panchayat Samitis have aroused a great deal of enthusiasm even in the interior areas. The common man is prone to think that he will be at the helm of affairs, through the process of democratic decentralisation, which will eliminate red tape and officialdom, the two things delaying progress greatly.

At this juncture, it is necessary to view the picture of Panchayat Samitis against its background of the National Extension Movement and the Community Projects. For instance, the Kakindada-Peddapuram Community Project, with its head-quarters at Samalkot, was one of the only two Community Projects allotted to the Andhra region. This project was inaugurated on October 2, 1952. Over Rs. 80 lakhs were spent during 1952-55. Nevertheless, it kindled very little enthusiasm among the people here. Community plans then were neither understood nor appreciated to the degree necessary. Successful implementation of Community development is not possible unless the villagers fully participate in the programme. More so, because the Extension principle prescribes half-to-half share by village where the community schemes are to be executed in the shape of 'Sramdan' or by way of public subscription or both. The basic idea underlying the National Extension Movement is to attain intensive development reaching every family in the countryside and to secure co-ordinated development of life as a whole. The Second main purpose of these programmes is to organise the community for co-operative endeavour, and to see that people living in the village are awakened to a better life, provided with opportunities for self-expression, creative living and cultural development and to see that villagers take to new ways of thinking and new aspirations. That is why the Community Projects were designed as plans of the people, by the people and for the people.

But, unfortunately all these years, the Community plans remained as plans of the officials without captivating the masses. With the result, the Block officials showed good progress on paper. Superior officers naturally appreciated this paper-progress all right. People were not having any say in the matter.

Now, with the formation of the Panchayat Samitis, the picture is changed for the better. The Stage II Samalkot Block is now converted into a Panchayat Samiti and the administration of the Block rests with the Panchayat Samiti and its standing committees. The Block Development Officer, who is the Chief Executive Officer, and all officials borne on the establishment of the Samiti are subordinate to the Panchayat Samiti with wide powers and finances to act quickly and effectively. All the village Panchayats are brought into the picture. The Samiti will be entrusted with elementary education, communications, medical and public health and social welfare, including Harijan Hostels. The Samiti will also administer the Community Development programme which covers agriculture. animal husbandry, co-operation and cottage, small-scale and village industries. The expenditure incurred by the Government on development activities will be made over to the Samitis as grant-in-aid. The Samiti will get three-fourth anna in every rupee of the land cess and one-fifth from the proceeds of the duty on transfer of property. It has also been decided to give 25 nP. per head of population as grant-in-aid to the Samiti and another 30 nP. per head for communications. The extension movement has supplemented the Community Projects inaugurated on October 2, 1952 and now, the Extension Programme is rightly entrusted to the Panchayat Samiti. Only this way, can the plans be worked as plans of the people, by the people and for the people.

(As reported by the 'Hindu' correspondent at Samalkot, Andhra Pradesh).

OUR TRAINING PROGRAMME

THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT Programme will cover 2/3 of the country by the end of the second Plan and the rest during the Third Plan. This will require a large number of functionaries — Community Development Workers—such as the B.D.Os. S.E.Os, Mukhya Sevikas, Extension Officers, etc. In order to make them effective in their work, it is essential that all these persons are trained properly so that they become aware of the growing needs of the society and also acquire necessary knowledge, skills and techniques all of which would make them really effective as Community Development workers. The following is in brief the programme for the training of the various categories of Community Development Workers.

(i) ORIENTATION TRAINING CENTRES

These centres are intended for imparting (a) Orientation Training of 1½ months duration to all the Block level functionaries such as the B.D.Os, S.E.Os and Extension Officers; (b) Job-training of 1½ months duration to all the B.D.Os and (c) refresher training through study courses of one month's duration to all experienced B.D.Os, District Heads of Technical Departments and non-officials such as the MLAs and Presidents of B.D.Cs/Panchayat Samities etc.

Thus far 8 Orientation Training Centres have been established and by the end of Second Plan three more will be started. It is also proposed to add two more centres during the Third Plan, bringing the total to 13 by that time.

By the end of Second Plan as many as 1,500 B.D.Os will receive orientation and job training (in addition to 2,311 already trained in the DOTCS) and an equal number will receive refresher training alongwith District Heads of Technical Departments and some non-officials. In all 1,650 District Heads of Technical Departments will have to be trained through these courses.

All the Extension Officers will receive orientation training at the above centres. Out of a total 30,000 Extension Officers, it is proposed to train as many as 8,250 by the end of the 2nd Plan and the balance will receive training during the Third Plan. This number may increase further because of several Extension Officers going out of the line on account of promotions, retirement, etc.

For training the above categories of personnel through different types of courses all the 11 Centres started or to be started during the 2nd Plan plus two more centres to be established in the Third Plan will have to be continued throughout the Third Plan.

(ii) SOCIAL EDUCATION ORGANISERS' TRAINING CENTRES

At present there are 13 S.E.O.T.Cs, functioning in the country. Out of these 13, one is reserved exclusively for training of S.E.Os in tribal work, 6 centres having two units for the training of S.E.Os and Mukhya Sevikas, 4 for the training of Mukhya Sevikas only and the remaining two for men S.E.Os only. These centres conduct job courses of 5 months duration for S.E.Os (in addition to the 1½ months Orientation course at the Orientation Training Centres), Orientation plus job course of 10½ months duration for Mukhya Sevikas and refresher courses for these persons.

Out of a total 5,000 S.E.Os 3,009 have received job training thus far and the balance would be trained during the 2nd Plan and Third Plan. As in the case of B.D.Os and E.Os, this category of workers would also require refresher training at certain intervals. We have just made a beginning in this direction and to cover the whole lot of S.E.Os, refresher courses would have to be continued till the end of the Third Plan.

Thus far 1,285 Mukhya Sevikas out of a total lot of 5,000 that would be in the field when all the Blocks are started, have received training. The balance would have to be trained partly during the Second and partly during the 3rd Plan. The Social Education Organisers' Training Centres have also been conducting *ad hoc* courses of 3½ months duration for the C.S.W.B. Mukhya Sevikas already working in the field. In all 400 such Mukhya Sevikas

have to be trained. The C.S.W.B. will also depute 900 Mukhya Sevikas for the long term course of 10½ months duration to the Social Education Organisers' Training Centres.

In order to meet the requirements of trained persons on the above scale, it will be necessary to continue all the S.E.O.T.Cs, during the Third Plan.

(iii) TRAINERS' TRAINING INSTITUTE

The Trainers' Training Institute was set up in December, 1958 for the training of Instructors from the S.E.O.T.Cs, O.T.C.s, and Principals of Extension Training Centres. It will be absolutely necessary to train all the teaching staff at regular intervals so as to keep them abreast of developments and attuned to the task of teaching extension personnel. It is proposed to run about 2-3 courses in a year and train approximately 20 persons in each course. Thus far only 25 Instructors have completed training and it will therefore be necessary to continue these courses throughout the Third Plan to cover the whole lot of Instructors from the various training centres.

In view of the new role assigned to the Panchayats of undertaking planning and execution of the Community Development programme for the villages it will be very necessary to impart a specialised training to the B.P.Os and the D.P.Os so that they are able to guide the Village Panchayats at all stages in the developmental activities. It is proposed to train the D.P.Os (in all about 260 in number for the present) in the Trainers' Training Institute, Rajpur (Dehradun) through a course of 1½ months duration. For the B.P.Os, training courses will be arranged in selected S.E.O.T.Cs or in separate Centres. As training of both these categories of officers has been thought of lately, it will have to be continued throughout the Third Plan, to cover the entire number of officers.

(iv) CENTRAL INSTITUTE FOR STUDY AND RESEARCH, MUSSOORIE

This Institute conducts orientation courses in Community Development for the key personnel of the State Governments / Administrations, M.Ps. and M.L.As. The following additional activities are proposed to be entrusted to this Institute.

(a) Training courses for selected BDOs and DPOs.
(b) Guidance to and supervision of the OTCs and SEOTCs in the matter of conducting courses at these centres.
(c) Control of various research centres.

(v) RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The Coordination Committee in its meeting held on 4th March, 1959, has recommended that 5 regional institutes for research work with Mussoorie research wing as the apex should be set up. The research wing at the Mussoorie institute has started its programme. It is expected that the 5 regional institutes for research work will be established in the beginning of the Third Plan.

(vi) NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE BDCs.

It has been decided that non-official members of the BDCs in all the States should be given training for a period ranging from 7 to 10 days. It is estimated that about 60,000 members will be trained during the Third Five-Year Plan.

(vii) PANCHAYAT SECRETARIES

The Central Council of Local Self Government has recommended that the Panchayat Secretaries in all the States should be trained. The working group appointed by the Council has drawn up a syllabus for training of Panchayat Secretaries. This syllabus envisages that the training should be for a period of two months. It is estimated that about 175,000 Panchayat Secretaries will have to be trained. The training will start from this year and is expected to continue to the end of the Third Five-Year Plan. All the State Governments have been asked to formulate schemes for training of their Panchayat Secretaries.

(viii) HIGHER TRAINING FOR MEMBERS OF FUNCTIONAL SUB-COMMITTEES OF BLOCK DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

The Annual Conference on Community Development held in Mysore in July 1959 has recommended that the

(*Continued on page* 13)

HUSSAILLI : WHAT HAVE YOU BROUGHT FOR US, THE LANDLESS ?

ONE EVENING as dusk was deepening, a man with a torn sack slung over his shoulders trudged home along the main highway toward Hussailli.

He was a coarse man, his greasy coat so patched that it was impossible to tell the original cloth, and smelled strong of sweat. He was a pedlar—or rather a landless labourer who peddled to eke out a living.

The project officer, coming by jeep on the way back to Mirzapur, recognized Moh'd Hussain even in the failing light. He pulled up and offered him a lift the few miles to Hussailli. The pedlar jumped on, somehow finding room between the two village level workers, the three villagers, the first aid medicine chest, and a sack of seed. The wind was high, and with the rumble of the jeep speeding homeward, it was impossible to talk until the jeep stopped at the turn off to Hussailli.

"So, where have you been today ?" said the project officer; Moh'd Hussain named the villages—eight in all and none less than two or three miles apart.

"Was business good ?" For answer, Moh'd Hussain took out a coin purse and handed it over, a wry smile on his face. The greasy and blackened purse held 4 annas and three pice.

"What have you been selling ?" This time the burlap sack was produced and opened out. There were a dozen small packages wrapped loosely in coarse brown paper. One contained a handful of groundnuts; another, cheap plastic hair barrettes, bright blue, bright pink; another a few parched grams; another hair-pins, another a sweet or two; another a few strings of small cheap glass beads in varied colours; other held varied spices and *massalas*—ginger root, garlic, coriander, turmeric. In all it represented an investment of perhaps two or three rupees. He spread them out with the guile of a pedlar, watching warily in the faint light of the dashboard to see the gleam of a customer.

"Is 4 annas all you have made today ? What are you going to eat tonight ?" He smiles again; it is an odd smile, at once wry and deferential, unctious and shrewd. His wife has been working in the government forests, he says, and will have some wages. Three of his children—he has six—have been tending cattle and earned a little also. He can spend some of his 4 annas for bajra. All this is said matter-of-factly, but his shrewd eyes watch for its effect. The project officer claps him companionably on the greasy shoulder.

As Moh'd Hussain gathers up his pack and turns to go, he slaps the seed bag on the rear seat of the jeep and laughs; only two teeth show. "What have you brought for us ?" It is an old exchange between him and the project officer. "What have you brought for us, the landless ?"

The project officer was silent for a moment. Moh'd Hussain's persistent "What have you brought for us, the landless ?" has greeted him, troubled him each time he has gone to Hussailli, or to the many of the development area's villages where a fifth, even a fourth of all families are landless labourers.

What have you brought for us, the landless ? That is the hard question in this effort to transform the lives and outlook of the rural people. It is true that the community development programme has built schools for all—but like the children of Moh'd Hussain, the children of the landless can rarely be spared to go. It is true that with more wells now being sunk by landowners who have secured taccavi loans from the block, there is more work for landless labourers on the newly irrigated fields. It is true that, even besides the ending of the old jagir system, further land reforms are underway that may eventually put a few acres into the hands of a new landless family.

But none of these things had earned Moh'd Hussain more than 4 annas today, nor very much more—or as much—for each of the ten other landless families like his in the tiny village of

Hussailli. And it is this that has made the block officers ponder and puzzle to find some present answer.

The project officer began to speak quickly. "It will be a buffalo for you, and for some of the others, if I can manage it. I don't know yet. I am trying. A buffalo—you can sell the milk. How is that ?"

Moh'd Hussain is incredulous, yet unctuous polite. The possibility of owning a buffalo is beyond him, and his mind cannot dwell seriously on what he would do with it. But the project officer is a kind man, and a District official. With polite smiles. Moh'd Hussain slides into the darkness toward home.

That was two years ago. The scheme that the project officer finally proposed and put into effect had, to be sure, no place in the formal block programme, nor indeed were funds formally provided for it, except as the project officer made the discretionary assignment of funds from other parts of the development programme.

But the scheme was imaginative and it worked. For the block as a whole, Rs. 36,000 in all was set aside for what were called "mixed farming loans" for those who were landless or virtually so. With these loans, cattle and other livestock were to be brought—a source of wealth for the landless, for the non-credit worthy owners of a few acres, a few guntas of land. Some, like Moh'd Hussain got a buffalo to milk for sale; others got a bullock to help work the few bits of land they owned, or to earn money on hire. Others got a heifer to breed, so they could sell the progeny. A few got sets of pure-bred poultry. which they could raise to give eggs and food for themselves and for sale; some got sheeps, some goats.

The discretion for selecting men for the loans in each of the block's villages was placed in the hands of the village level worker and the village sarpanch, subject to the final sanction of the BDO. Each village level worker, in the 12 VLW circles in the block, had Rs. 3,000 for his eight villages, and took applications as he visited each village.

Moh'd Hussain got a loan of Rs. 150 to buy a buffalo. But he is shrewd, and, with the money given for one mature animal, he bought two small young she-buffaloes instead. His wife has the privilege of taking part of her pay in fodder as she works in the Government forest, as does Moh'd Hussain himself when he has worked as a labourer. With this fodder, they fed and fattened—and bread—the pair of young buffaloes.

Today when you meet him, he is clearly more prosperous. His coat is still greasy and torn, but the pedlar's sack is new. He is a man of property. Each of his buffaloes has borne a calf; in exchange for one he has bought a cow. With three buffaloes and a cow he has become a *dood walla*. Just now, he says, he is peddling only because it is the calving season, and there is no milk to sell. In a few months, he will have five animals. He smiles in shrewd delight. It is true that he paid nothing back on his loan of Rs. 150 as yet, but he faces the prospect with composure. With five animals, a man is confident.

What is in his purse ? He opens it. It is a new purse, clean still and its metal clasp still shiny. Rs. 4 and annas ½.

(Reprinted from a monograph on Indian Villages by Miss Jean Joyce, published by the Ministry of Community Development & Co-operation).

OUR TRAINING PROGRAMME

(Continued from page 11)

non-official members of the functional sub-committees of the BDCs should also be provided facilities for higher training. The entire country will be covered by about 5,000 blocks. It is expected that there will be 5 functional sub-committees, in each block. If there are 4 members in each sub-committee, there will be one lakh members in all these committees. If all these members have to be trained, about 80% of its members will have to be provided facilities for training in the Third Five-Year Plan.

In addition to the above schemes, schemes for training of Sarpanches, Up-Sarpanches and village women are also being formulated in consultation with the State Governments. It is proposed that the expenditure for training of these functionaries should be met from the block budget.

OUR POST BOX

Shyam Sunder (West Bengal) :—Are the village Panchayats intended to be the natural and primary units of Local Self-Government or mere agencies of the Government for planning and development ?

Answer :—They are to be both. The Village Panchayats will function as the Government of the people at the village level. They are to be treated in their own sphere on a par with the Assembly at the State level or the Parliament at the Centre. If the Panchayats are to be treated as mere agents for collecting revenue or money under the small savings scheme or for ensuring the fulfilment of agricultural and other development targets handed from above, their contribution to rural life will be negligible.

PARTY SYSTEM

Mohan Singh, (Punjab) : The success of the scheme of democratic decentralisation depends on the calibre of the elected Panches. Does not the present system of elections, fought on a party basis, run counter to this objective ?

Answer : There is no doubt that the present party system as it may be formed in rural areas may suffer from many weaknesses. It would of course be best if we could have Panches unanimously chosen by the people. But in practice, it is not possible to achieve such unanimity. The next best alternative is to have the elections free from caste, communal or sectarian outlook. It is time that we concede to our people the right to make their own mistakes. At the village level elections, the personalities of the candidates are too well-known to be mistaken or confused by extraneous considerations and therefore the selection would be more thorough and justified. The hullabullo created by the 'party walas' will not cut much ice in the face of the personality of the candidate. In fact, the village elections will prove to be the real touchstone of the people's feelings and political parties would not dare to face the people without some concrete achievements to their credit. Democracy will thus have a truer meaning and a broader base.

THE TWO WINGS

Krishnappa (Mysore) : What will be the relationship between the Panchayats and the Cooperatives ? What steps have been taken to ensure that there is no conflict between the two ?

Answer : The Panchayats and the Cooperatives represent the political and the economic wings of the village democracy. Their managements and staff are independent of each other. But as the Panchayat is the elected sovereign body of the village, it is responsible for all matters concerning the welfare and development of the village, including the promotion of economic and cooperative activities. But the Panchayat will have no power to interfere in the day-to-day working of the Cooperative just as the latter will have no right to call into question the working of a Panchayat. And yet the chances of a conflict between them cannot be wholly ruled out. In order to guard against such a situation, it has been suggested by some that an Advisory Committee consisting of the Presidents, Secretaries and the executive officials of the two bodies may be set up.

NEW SOURCES

Des Ram, (Delhi) : Now that the Panchayats are being entrusted with the responsibility of development work, what assistance—financial or otherwise is proposed to be given to them in order to help them discharge their duties well ?

Answer : The allotments in the annual budget placed at the disposal of the various departments including the

Community Development will be pooled together and earmarked for Blocks and villages at the meetings of the Zila Parishad and the Block Samitis respectively. This amount will then be placed at the disposal of each village Panchayat to be spent on items of development approved by the Block Samiti. Besides this, a sizable portion of the land revenue will also be allotted to these bodies. It is understood that the Mysore Government has allowed 60 percent of the land revenue to the Panchayats. In order to strengthen the internal resources, the Panchayats are being delegated powers to levy and collect different types of taxes. They are being invested with ownership rights of community assets such as buildings, common lands, land under cultivation, quarries, fish ponds etc., which are fruitful sources of village income. Other measures taken in this respect include Study tours and camps. These are being held to educate the village representatives for enabling them to discharge their new functions and responsibilities properly. A separate local self-Government cadre comprising of officials at the village level like the school teacher, the Panchayat Secretary, the village level worker and others is also being formed. This will be under the administrative control of the Block Samitis and Panchayats.

NO TUSSLE

Arjun Bhutani (Rajasthan) : Will not the creation of a Block Samiti between Zila Parishad and the Village Panchayat result in a constant tug-of-war between the Samiti and the Panchayat ?

Answer : Fears regarding the possible clash between the Block Samiti and the Panchayat seem to be premature and groundless for their spheres of activities are clearly demarcated. They are complementary to each other. Under the C.D. Programme, the Block has been adopted as the administrative unit for developmental activities. Being poorly equipped to face their new responsibilities, the Panchayats need the help and guidance of the Block Samiti. The chosen representatives of the Block area, assisted by the B.D.O. and the extension staff, is in a pivotal position to render that service. But there is nothing sacrosanct about these Committees at various levels and the matter has been left open for the States to take necessary steps in the matter suiting the local needs. In a country of our size, there is plenty of scope for trying such administrative experiments and in the end to adopt what suits one best. In fact, States like Bombay, Mysore and Bengal are not in favour of setting up Block Samitis at this stage.

NO EMPIRE

V. Ramaswami (Madras) : There is a feeling in certain quarters that after the ushering in of the new scheme of democratic decentralisation, the C.D. Programme has been given a "safe burial" in as much as the responsibility for doing or not doing anything in the field of development will now rest with the Panchayat and not the Community Development department. Would you agree with this view ?

Answer : To say that the C.D. Programme will be buried and the C.D. staff will go to sleep once the torch has been passed on to the Panchayats is to misunderstand things completely. The C.D. staff will have to bear the cross till the ultimate objective of rural development in all its aspects is achieved. This is no easy task. It involves comparatively bigger responsibilities. The success of the programme will now be judged by what the Panchayats do. There is nothing wrong in entrusting the Panchayats with the responsibility for carrying on development activities. In fact the Ministry of Community Development has never been under any illusion about its ultimate objective. It has never sought to build up an empire of its own.

WRONG ASSUMPTION

L. N. Gupta (U.P.) : Don't you agree that 25% of the Block Funds which are spent on staff salary are a dead weight on the programme ?

Answer : This is an oft-repeated criticism but is not correct and is based on a misunderstanding of facts. Actually most of the staff employed in the C.D. Blocks is not involved in administration but engaged in service programme of assistance and

guidance to rural people, and therefore, the same cannot be regarded as an overhead administrative charge.

SILTED TANKS

Y. Srinivasaiah (Andhra Pradesh): How is it that the C.D. programme which laid so much stress on approach roads has completely missed the more urgent need for renovating the silted tanks which have played an important role in the village life through the past centuries?

Answer: The need for understanding the renovation of silted tanks was always recognised in the programme. In several blocks the activity of deepening the silted tanks has been carried out as part of the Shramdan drive by the villagers. However, this is expected to be carried out in a more systematic and thorough manner after the transfer of such works to Panchayats which are now being made increasingly responsible for developmental activities under the scheme of democratic decentralisation.

TELL-TALE STATISTICS

G. S. Joshi (M.P.): Is it ever realised by those in authority that the statistics pertaining to achievements in the C.D. Blocks, particularly the People's contribution for the evaluation of which there are no uniform and systematic norms and records, are likely to be grossly exaggerated for obvious reasons and therefore, are unreliable?

Answer: The inadequacy of our statistics in general is realised by everybody. Under the C.D. programme, necessary precautions are taken to ensure the correctness and soundness of the statistics. A separate Directorate known as the Administrative Intelligence has been set up both at the Central and State levels. Besides, Programme Assistants have been appointed at the Block level to help collect and sift the material for statistics. Although this staff is inadequate to meet the needs of the situation, yet every effort is made to ensure that the statistics have uniform and sound basis. So far as the evaluation of the people's contribution is concerned, there are practical difficulties in the way of arriving at correct figures. It is expected that with the devolution of powers to the Panchayats and the appointment of literate persons to work as secretaries of these panchayats, it will be possible to keep a more systematic and complete account of the work done voluntarily by the people.

TRAINING OF SARPANCHES

(*Continued from page* 8)

a basic knowledge of modern methods and techniques in Public Health and Sanitation, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Minor Irrigation, Rural Housing and Industries. Besides talks and discussions, this programme should include demonstrations in the field.

(c) *Field visits:*

The objective is not an 'outing', but education. Visits may be arranged to institutions and to knowledgeable individuals in areas nearby.

(*iii*) The responsibility for organising and conducting the training camps should primarily vest in the Panchayat Samitis who would no doubt appoint a functional Sub-committee on training. The officials at all levels particularly at block level should assist in the formulation and implementation of the programme.

(*iv*) Block Extension Officers should be primarily responsible for arranging subject-matter talks, demonstrations and field visits. In regard to general subjects the cooperation of non-official leaders in conducting the training amp should be obtained.

(*v*) The responsibility for drawing up the over-all plan should vest in the Panchayat Samitis under the general supervision of Zila Parishads. There is, however, no objection to the District Collectors being in overall charge of this programme until the Block Samitis and Zila Parishads are constituted.

(*vi*) The organisational details of the camps namely venue, messing arrangements, use of audio-visual aids, lay out of demonstrations, shramdan, etc., should be on the lines of the Gram Sahayaks' Training as stated in the Manual on Village Leaders Training Camps.

(*vii*) An expenditure up to Re. 1 per head per day may be allowed from the block budget for meeting deficit, if any, on expenditure on meals.

ASSAULT RACE

Pottery painting can be fascinating

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